

A  
SERMON

PREACHED

Before the Right Honourable

THE

Lord Mayor

AND

ALDERMEN

OF

L O N D O N

At the Guild-Hall Chappel

on *Decemb.* 18<sup>th</sup> 1681.

By *Jo. Goodman* D. D. Chaplain in  
Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *R. Royston* Book-seller to His most Sacred  
Majesty at the *Angel* in *Amen-Corner*, 1681.

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# Moore Mayor.

*Curia Special. tent. die Domin. xviii<sup>o</sup>  
die Decemb. 1681. Annoq; Regis  
CAROLI Secundi Angl. &c.  
xxxiii<sup>o</sup>*

**T**His Court doth desire Dr Goodman to Print his Sermon this day Preached at the *Guild-Hall* Chappel, before the Lord Mayor, and Aldermen of this City.

*Wagstaffe.*

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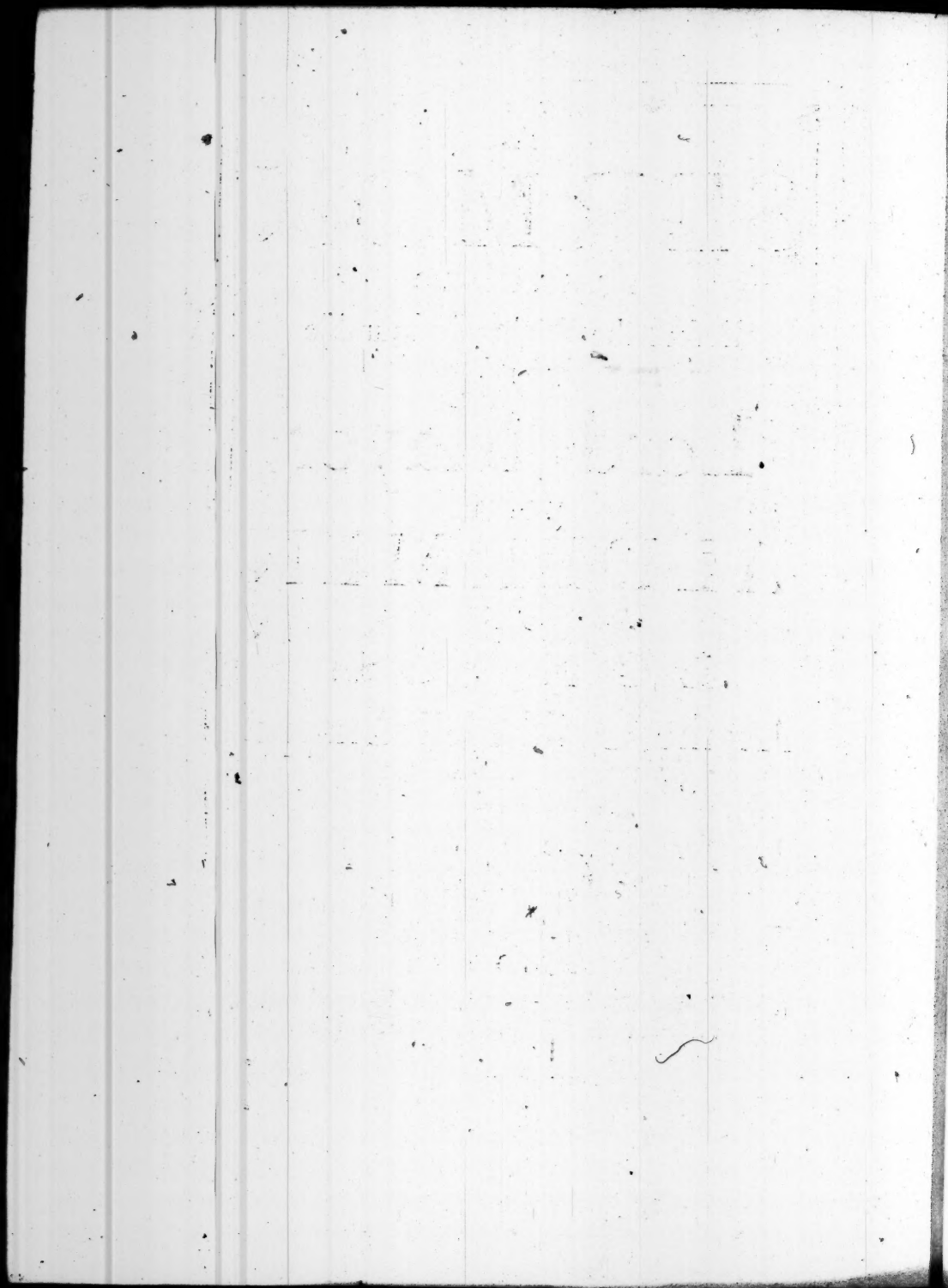
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TO THE  
Right Honourable  
**Sir John Moore,**  
Lord Mayor of London,  
And to the Honourable  
**Court of Aldermen,**

My Lord and Gentlemen,

**I** *Am obliged not only by my Religion in general, as I am a Christian, to do all the good I can ; but peculiarly by my Profession, as a Minister of the Gospel, to provoke others thereunto. And the consideration hereof deter-*

A 3 *mined.*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*mined me to make choice of that Subject on which I discoursed last Lord's day, in your Audience: For as I am very certain, that doing good in this World is the way to secure an interest in that which is to come: So I was very sensible, that speaking to a great and rich and honourable City, I had an opportunity in my hands of provoking those that had great Advantages of so doing.*

*And therefore the very same Reasons, which induced me then to handle that Subject, have inclined me since to print what I then delivered; especially having received not only your Commands for it, but the Warrant of your Judgments, that the Publication would be useful to the aforesaid design, in compliance with which I now humbly present the Sermon to your hands, and crave your Acceptance.*

*And now, my Lord, give me leave to say,*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*say, That although I was, till this occasion, a Stranger to your Lordship; yet I could not be so much a Stranger to my Native Country, as not to have heard the general Joy and Acclamations of all good men at your Election to this great Magistracy, and since that I have had the happiness nearer to observe the Candour, Benignity and Obligingness of your Temper towards all men, joyned with a well known Loyalty to our Sovereign, and an hearty affection for the Protestant Religion and Church of England. I am inclined to hope, that the Divine Providence hath designed you a further Honour, namely, That he will make you an happy Instrument of allaying the immoderate and unchristian Heats amongst the several Parties within this City and Nation, of preserving a right understanding between His Majesty and his People, of*  
turning

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

turning the hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the Just. *This as I know is most earnestly desired and endeavoured by your Lordship, so therein you shall always be assisted with the hearty Prayers of*

Your Lordship's

Faithful and

Dec. 23<sup>d</sup> 1681.

Humble Servant,

John Goodman.

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I  
A  
S E R M O N  
P R E A C H E D  
Before the Right Honourable  
THE  
Lord M A Y O R and A L D E R M E N  
Of the C I T Y of  
L O N D O N.

---

M A T. XIX. Verse 16.

*And behold one came and said unto him,  
Good Master, what good thing shall I  
do, that I may have eternal life?*

**I**T hath always been accounted, if not an  
Argument of Wisdom, yet a sign of an  
hopeful Temper and a Capacity for the  
attainment of it, to ask a discreet and per-  
tinent Question: Especially if therewithal there  
be so much prudence, as to make choice of,

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and

and apply ones self to such a person as is likely to be able to resolve it.

Both these qualifications meet in the man in my Text. For in the first place he neither comes with some Rabbinical nicety, for the ostentation of his own learning and subtilty; nor with a captious interrogatory to intangle our Saviour in his Speech, but with a becoming gravity and sincerity to inquire about the great affair of another World. And for his satisfaction herein he applies himself to him that came from Heaven on purpose to instruct men in the way thither.

But besides this, there are (in the Context) several very remarkable things in the Character of the person who makes this inquiry, and which consequently render the Question propounded by him the more considerable, as

In the first place *v.* 20. he is said to be a young man, and yet the warmth and vigour of youth, together with the common presumption of having long to live in this world, did not abate his concern for the life to come.

Again *v.* 22. he is said to be a rich man; yet neither the pleasures, nor the cares and business of this world, made him forgetful of another world.

And



And if we compare with the Text the parallel story in S. Luke 18. 18. this person is called *ἄρχων* a Ruler, or (as the vulgar Latine reads it *Princeps*) a Prince ; yet for all this he sought the Kingdom of Heaven.

Lastly , If we look back again to v. 20. he is described to be a virtuous or moral man ; for he had kept the *Commandments from his youth up*, notwithstanding he desired to be further instructed, that he might make sure of eternal life.

Now from the Question propounded by this person under these circumstances I make these four Observations.

*First*, That the other World (or a life after this present) is a matter of that great moment and importance, that no thinking man can chuse but have his mind run upon it, and be inquisitive about it.

*Secondly*, That he who seriously and ingenuously inquires into this affair, will easily be resolved in the affirmative, that there is such a thing.

*Thirdly*, He that being satisfied that there is such a state, as a life hererafter, is destitute of common sense, if he do not passionately desire to have a share in it.



Lastly, He that desires an interest in the World to come, is very absurd and unreasonable to hope for it, without doing some good thing for the attainment of it.

If it had not been a Question naturally occurring to the minds of men, it is not probable this young man would have troubled his head about it.

If upon consideration of the Question, the affirmative had not been highly credible, he would not have supposed it, but disputed it with our Saviour.

If upon supposition of the truth or probability of such a state, the enjoyment of it had not been matter of vast consequence, a rich man would not have troubled himself, nor our Saviour, about it.

And if doing good had not been evidently the way to attain it, our Saviour would never have given such Answer to his Question, as we find he did.

So that all the aforesaid Propositions have a just foundation in the Text; and therefore I intend to discourse briefly of them all in order, beginning with the first.

*Proposi-*

*Proposition I.*

That the Question about another World, or a Life to come, is of that nature, that no thoughtful man can avoid it, or chuse but be sollicitous about it. For it is certain we cannot so much as flatter our selves into an hope, that we shall live always here; and therefore it is obvious and natural for the mind of man to look beyond this short Stage, and to consider what shall become of him hereafter.

And although this inquiry be about a thing future, that consideration doth not at all abate the desire of man after satisfaction therein; forasmuch as this is one of the peculiar Characters of humane Nature, and our Priviledge above Beasts, that whereas they are wholly taken up with what is present and before them, Mankind hath a further scope, reflects upon what is past, and projects what is to come, and accordingly exercises his passions, and lays his designs: insomuch that we account him no better than a fool, that values nothing but what is present.

Nor is this sollicitude about the future a meer curiosity or extravagancy of the mind (as Atheistical

stical Men would suggest to us) but very rational, as well as natural : For it is obvious to every Man to discourse after this manner : How comes it to pass, that I have an understanding Mind, a Freedom of Choice, a Conscience reflecting upon my own Actions ? nay, whence is it, or to what purpose, that I have some kind of Notion and Anticipation of another World, if there were no such thing ? And although it should be granted, that these things amount not to a Demonstration, that therefore there is a Life hereafter ; yet can it not be denied, but that they afford sufficient ground of Enquiry, whether there be not such a thing, which is enough to the present purpose.

Besides, the Consequence of this Business is so unspeakably great, as not only to recommend it to our Prudence and Caution, but to urge it upon our Consideration : For the Question is no less than this, Whether I shall live for ever, or be for ever buried in Oblivion ? Whether I shall shortly be, as if I had never been, and all my Thoughts perish with me ? or, Whether I shall survive the Ruins of my Body, and in another State reap the Fruit of my present Labours ? Nay, that is not the bottom

bottom of the Case neither ; but, Whether I shall be crowned with Glory, in reward of the Good I have done here ; or be plagued and tormented in another World, for my Mis-carriages in this ?

These things concern a Man so deeply, that he must either have lost all the Principles of Reason, and all Sense of Humanity, or must do a mighty violence to himself, that can abstract himself from these Considerations.

And it is further very observable, That this Question is not only of great moment, with respect to the other World (when that time comes) ; but is also of mighty Influence upon the Management of the present Life. Forasmuch as the Hinge of all our Elections and Prosecutions turns upon this Point ; and that till this Question is first resolved, a Man knows not what course to take, or how to govern himself.

As for Example, Whether a Man should be a Coward, and a Parasite, and flatter and humour every Body for Self-preservation ? or, Whether he shall dare to do bravely for his Prince and Country, or any other excellent Purpose, out of a Sense of Honour and Gallantry ?

lantry? For it is evident, that if we have no Concern after Death, Cowardise and Baseness is the greatest Wisdom; and contrariwise, if there be a Life hereafter, a quite contrary course is more reasonable and eligible.

Again, Suppose a Man to be in Adversity, what counsels shall he take, and how shall he behave himself? Whether shall he sullenly sit down in Desperation, and curse his Stars, or erect his Mind with Hope? It is certain, the former of these cannot be blamable, and the latter is ridiculous, if there be nothing to come hereafter.

In a word, Whether a Man shall suppress his Lusts, or stifle his Conscience? Whether he shall live like a Beast, in expectation to die so; or live like a Man, in hopes to live eternally? This, and a thousand other Questions can by no means admit of a Solution, unless that other great Case be first resolved, viz. Whether there be a World to come, or no?

Therefore this discreet Person; (in the Text) in the Prime of his Youth, and Flower of his Strength, and in the highest Tide of his Prosperity, had considered of it. It was not a Sick-bed Meditation; for he was in Health:  
nor



*before the Lord Mayor.* 9

nor a melancholy Qualm of old Age; for he was Young: nor the Effect of his being discontented, and out of humour with the World; for he was Rich and Prosperous: But it was the Effect of manly Sense and Wisdom; and so it will become every other Man.

But so much for the First Point, I proceed to the Second.

*Propos. II.*

Whosoever seriously and ingenuously considers the Question about a World to come, or eternal Life, will easily be resolved in the Affirmative, That there is such a State.

I do not say, That there is such Evidence of this great Point, as that there can be no evasion; or that Men cannot dis-believe it, if they will; for besides that *Contumacia Deus nullum dedit remedium*, God himself hath never provided means, nor intended the satisfaction of the Obstinate and Contumacious.

Besides that (I say) if any Argument could be brought so irresistibly convincing, as that there were no possibility of withstanding it, there could in such a case be no virtue nor

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excel-

excellency in believing : For what Commendation can it be to assent to that, from which it is impossible for me to dissent ?

But the meaning of the Proposition is agreeable to that saying of *Tertullian*, *Qui studuerit intelligere, cogere & credere*, He that candidly and honestly applies his mind to the business, shall find it not easie to resist the evidence for it.

Accordingly we find a great part of the Heathen World, by the meer power of Natural Reason, and upon Principles of Philosophy (without the Advantage of Divine Revelation) to have attained very good Convictions hereof ; particularly *Tully* in his Book, *De Senectute*, in the Person of *Cato*, and *Plato* in his Apology for *Socrates*, represent both those Persons, as under very feeling & passionate apprehensions of another Life : For they observed, that in all the changes of things, and in the various revolutions of Matter and Body, not the least Atome of Matter was lost in the Universe ; and hereupon they thought it very unreasonable to conceive, that Life and Mind should be extinguished : Especially seeing that Souls, and all Intellectual Beings, are pure and uncompounded, and admit not of contrary Principles



ciples (in their Constitution) to combate with, and destroy each other, as the case is in Bodies.

Besides, they considered (as I observed in part before) that Human Souls were not only endued with Reason and Choice, and Conscience; but had (consequently thereupon) very clear Notions of certain Moral Differences of things, not as pleasant and hurtful only, but as good and evil upon higher accounts. The result of which Contemplation could not chuse but put them under Expectations of some account of their Choice and Actions hereafter; especially since they could not but be aware of the obscurity of Divine Providence in this World; and that there was no exact distribution of Rewards and Punishments here, according to Men's Demerits.

But what shall we say then to those pretended Wits that say, Let me see a Spirit, and then I'll believe there is a God; let me have a sight of Heaven and Hell, or I'll not believe there is any World to come?

Surely these are a sort of subtle Philosophers, that require flat Contradictions for the satisfaction of their reason; viz. to see a Spirit (which is supposed to be invisible) for the proof

that there are invifible Beings, and to have the World to come prefent, for proof that there is fuch a thing future.

Thefe Men believe not; but it is not be-  
caufe they cannot, but becaufe they will not:  
nor is their Incredulity to be imputed to their  
Sagacity (as they would have it thought) but  
either to their Immodesty, in requiring unrea-  
fonable Evidence, or their Imprudence in not  
knowing what is proper and fufficient.

But whatever the cafe be, as to natural  
Light, and whether that can give fufficient fe-  
curity of another World or no, it matters not  
much now that we have Divine Revelation;  
for he that doth but look into the Gofpel, will  
find *Life and Immortality* thereby brought to Light,  
and Eternal Life written (almost) upon every  
Page thereof.

And if there be any fo great a Stranger to  
the Principles of Christianity, as to call in que-  
ftion the Divine Authority of the Holy Scrip-  
ture; yet let fuch Perfon but give it the al-  
lowance due to every common Hiftory of mat-  
ter of Fact, and he fhall not go away unsatis-  
fied in this great particular: For upon fuppo-  
fition of the Truth, and reality of our Saviours  
Refurrection and Afcenfion; both which are  
con-

confirmed by the Testimony of abundance of credible Witnesses, and had been the easiest matter in the World to be confuted, if they had not been notoriously true, there can remain no doubt either of the Life of a Soul, after the Death of the Body, or of another World.

For who that considers our Saviour crucified, dead, buried, and lying three days in the Grave, and then rising again, eating and drinking, and conversing with his Disciples forty days together, can doubt whether a Soul can exist after the Body is dead? And who that considers him visibly ascending up to Heaven, in the Presence of so many Witnesses, can doubt of another World, besides that we at present live, and breathe in?

This is the fullest and most convincing Evidence of things of this Nature, that either God thought fit to give, or Man in modesty can require: And it is such evidence, as the weakest Persons may apprehend, and all the Wit and Sophistry in the World can never baffle or confute.

And so I pass to my

3. *Third Observation*, That he who is perswaded, that there is such a thing as eternal Life really

really to be obtained, cannot chuse but passionately desire to have a share in it.

The reason is plain and obvious, because eternal life is so great a good, that a man must be supposed to hate himself, that can do otherwise than desire it.

Eternal life is to be perpetually invigorated with the Power of the Almighty, and thence to feel a perpetual Spring of life within himself; by means of which he is to all Ages fresh as the morning, and durable as the very Heavens. Such a person can be sensible of no declension, change or interruption; he is placed out of the Sphere of sickness, pain, death, or the least suspicion of any of them.

He feels a constant Harmony in all his Powers, enjoys an uninterrupted peace in his Conscience, and is always under the light of Gods countenance.

Such an estate as this is so unspeakable a good, as that it falls not under the election of our wills, there is no freedom of choice in this case, we must desire it whether we will or no, if we believe it: insomuch that it cannot be so much as a sign of Grace or Virtue to wish for it, because it is natural and necessary. Can any man wish to be eternally extinct, or especially

cially to be everlastingly miserable? No man can think of either of them without horror, nor consequently of eternal life; without a kind of ecstasie of desire. *S. Joh. 6. 66.* when the multitude (which followed our Saviour only for the Loaves) began to forsake him, he turns to his Disciples, and saith to them, *Will ye also go away? Lord (saith S. Peter) whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* As if he had said, "If it were possible for us to be so destitute of all Grace and Gratitude, as not to adhere to thee for thy own Goodness and Excellency; yet can we be so void of all sense and self-love, as to forsake thee and eternal life together?"

We read of some poor Pagans that happened to hear certain Socratical Lectures touching the Souls Immortality, and they were so transported with the admirable News, that they were ready to make away themselves, that they might presently enter into possession of that blessed estate of Immortality, which was represented to them. And they were so much in earnest about it, that the Magistrate thought it necessary, by a publick Edict, to prohibit such Lectures, lest the Country should be unpeopled by that means. By all which it appears, that



that eternal life is so infinitely desirable, that (as I have said) there is no deliberation in the case; and therefore upon supposition of the belief of it, the only thing in question is, what we must do for the attainment of it? Which brings me to my

4. *Fourth and last Observation: Viz.* That he who is convinced that there is such a state as eternal life, and desires a share in it, cannot reasonably hope it, but upon doing good for the attainment of it. *Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*

Now for the proof of this, the holy Scripture is so express and full, that I should exceed the limits of time allotted for this Discourse, should I but mention the passages; and the Texts are so much at hand to every man, that it cannot be necessary I should particularize. I will therefore excuse my self that labour, and you the exercise of your patience therein, and instead thereof put you in mind, That there needs no Scripture in the case, forasmuch as it is the natural sense of every mans mind, a Principle in our Consciences not infused into us by Education or Instruction, but so ingraven by the very hand of God upon our Faculties, that no Art or endeavour can efface it.

For

For what else is the reason, that men are brave and comfortable in their Spirits, when they have done well and worthily, that they are then erected with hope, and kindly warmed in their breasts with Peace and Joy, that they can look up towards God with delight, and towards death without consternation?

And on the other side, what is the cause that when men are conscious to themselves to have lived wickedly, and done base and unworthy actions, that their Spirits are down, their very countenance falls, and all things look black and melancholy round about them? What (I say) can be the ground of this remarkable diversity in mens secret sense, but the force and efficacy of that eternal Truth which God pronounced to *Cain*, but hath written upon every mans heart: *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? but if thou doest evil, sin lieth at the door.* So that there can be no doubt of the Proposition in general, That he that will hope to live for ever, and receive good in another World, must do good in this. Yet in regard there may be mistakes in the application of it, and all mistakes in an affair of this nature, are of perillous consequence to the Souls of men; therefore I think it necessary to explain this general Aphorism by the three following Particulars. D      *First,*



*First*, And first for the clearing of this matter, it is to be understood, That whatever good things are expected to be done by us in order to eternal life; yet there is nothing of proper Merit to be attributed thereunto, as if we could deserve eternal life at the hands of God, or make a Purchase of Heaven by our Obedience, and challenge the Justice of God for the performance: Alas! *when we have done all we can*, we must acknowledge *we are but unprofitable servants*; for we have not so much as performed that Duty, which was owing from us upon the meer obligation of our Creation, and therefore can make no Claim to the admirable favour of eternal life: that must for ever be acknowledged the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But this truth is so plain, and confessed amongst Protestants, that I think it sufficient thus briefly to have named it.

Therefore *Secondly*, When we suppose that something is to be done by us in order to the attainment of everlasting life, it is not to be understood exclusively of the Grace of God, and the assistance of his holy Spirit; as if we could do any thing worthy of God without his help. For besides that such a Doctrine is contrary to the  
the

the Tenor of the whole Gospel, to the undertaking of our Saviour, to the Promise, and to the Office of the Holy Ghost, and is derogatory to the Providence of God, especially as he intitles himself to be the Author of all good: it would in the consequence of it bring in Merit at a back door, which we excluded before. Forasmuch as that although eternal life (as to the proposition and promise of it) be acknowledged the gift of God; yet if I by my own meer strength, without Divine Grace, can perform the Condition of it, the reward will be in some sort imputable to my performance; for the case will stand thus, That eternal life is possible and attainable in the general, will be owing to Gods free gift; but that such a man in particular attains it, will be wholly owing to himself.

I should not have thought it necessary to have taken notice of this neither in such an Assembly, but that I observe several of the Ancients, and particularly S. *Jerom* and S. *Austin* have thought this to be the error of the person who propounds the question in my Text, *i. e.* they look upon this young man as a Pelagian as it were by anticipation: And therefore they read the reply which our Saviour makes to him thus, *Quid interrogas me de bono, &c?* not (as we

do) *why callest thou me good ? but why askest thou me of good ? there is none good but God.* As if the young man had addrest himself to our Saviour thus : “ Good Master , thou propoundest to us  
 “ eternal life and unspeakable happiness as attainable in another World, I am right glad  
 “ of the Tidings , and with all my heart embrace the proposition ; and now do but tell  
 “ me also what is to be done for the attainment of it, and I ask no more, let me alone for the  
 “ performance. Now to remedy this capital mistake of his, they suppose our Saviours Answer to import as if he had said : “ Alas ! poor  
 “ man, you take wrong measures of your own sufficiency, you think that no other Grace of  
 “ God is necessary to you but the revelation of the Divine Will, whereas the very truth is,  
 “ That although eternal life be infinitely desirable, and you do earnestly desire it ; yet you  
 “ are not aware of the treachery of your own heart, and the difficulties of arising to a temper fit for eternal life : You must therefore  
 “ beg of God (the Giver of every good and perfect gift) that by his holy Spirit he will  
 “ assist you in the performance of your Duty,  
 “ as well as to inform you what is to be done  
 “ by you.

But

But *Thirdly* and principally, that which I think especially useful to be noted for the right understanding of this business is, That when the inquiry is made touching what is to be done in order to eternal life: the meaning is not, that any one or more single acts (how good and excellent soever) separate from an habitual holy life, can qualifie any man for eternal life; but an uniform goodness, a Divine temper, an heavenly conversation. For it is very reasonable to think so well of the generality of Mankind (at least of such of them as to whom the Gospel is made known, and eternal life propounded) that there is scarcely any one Duty so hard and difficult, but would be undertaken for once by any man, if without more ado he might be saved by it. For neither is any one Duty whatsoever so hard to discharge as a constant course of obedience, though in lesser instances; nor is God so well pleased with a generous action as with an obedient heart: he himself having told us, that *to obey is better than Sacrifice.*

There was a mighty Zeal upon several of the Christians in the Primitive times to suffer Martyrdom for their Profession: insomuch that divers of them were ready to accuse themselves  
before

before they were delated, and to provoke their Persecutors to take away their Lives. This Fer-  
 vor of their affection to Religion, and the con-  
 tempt of Life upon the account of it, was highly  
 commendable; but the causes of the Precipitan-  
 cy were not always unblamable: For it seems  
 that some of them chose to go in a fiery Chariot  
 to Heaven, as the nearer way, and far more  
 easie than the tedious course of active Obedi-  
 ence: and excellent Discourses were made by  
 the holy Men of God in those times to dis-  
 swade them from this course. The principal of  
 which were agreeable to that which I am now  
 discoursing, *viz.* That (whatever they might  
 think) it was certainly more difficult in it self  
 to weather out the storm at Sea, than to make  
 suddenly to Port; more useful to the Church  
 to maintain the Combate, than to be present-  
 ly crowned with Martyrdom; and consequent-  
 ly more acceptable to God, that they should  
 persevere in an holy Life, than to die the most  
 glorious Death.

And in this Sense I take that remarkable Pas-  
 sage of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. 3. *If I should  
 give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body  
 to be burned; yet without Charity I am nothing.*  
 It is certain, that a Man cannot be supposed  
 to



to be willing to give all his Goods to feed the Poor, without a great measure of Charity to Men, at least as we ordinarily understand that expression; and it is not likely, that a Man should give his Body to be burned without love to God. I think I may take it for granted also, that if any single Acts of Virtue would carry a Man to Heaven, they would be such as these mentioned by the Apostle, *i. e.* either Liberality to the Poor, or Martyrdom for Christ. Therefore by *Charity*, without which (he saith) all these are nothing: He seems to mean, not the Act, but the Habit, and an universal Love of God and Goodness.

It was a Question often, and upon several occasions propounded to our Saviour by the Jews, *Master, Which is the great Commandment of the Law?* They, it seems, had a corrupt Opinion amongst them, That God set such a value upon some of his Laws above the rest, that if any Man would come up to those, he might easily be dispensed with in neglect of the other: Whereupon there arose very hot Disputes among them, which might be the darling Precept; and here some were for Circumcision, as the ancientest Law, and of most general

neral Obligation; some for the Sabbath, as seeming to be most strictly enjoined; other for Sacrifice, as that whereby they thought the might expiate all other omissions: One or other of these they were all apt to think to be the Critical points of Salvation. And they being frugal Men of their Labour and Devotion, come to our Saviour (perhaps secretly with design to expose him to the Odium of one Party or other but apparently) to learn the most compendious way, and the shortest cut to Heaven.

But our Saviour being aware as well of their malicious Designs, as of the falseness of their Hypothesis, refers alway those that ask him the Question, for Answer, not to any single Precept or Branch of the Law; but to such a passage, as contained a Summary or Epitome of the whole; namely, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and soul, and strength.*

And in like manner he deals by this Person in the Text, telling him, *v. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments. q. d.* It is not enough that thou observe any one Precept, but thou must make conscience of them all. And the young Man himself seems to be aware



aware of, and to have escaped this common Error : For he replies, *All these have I kept from my youth up ; What lack I yet ?* As if he had said, “ I am very sensible, that without universal “ Obedience to the Laws of God, I cannot approve my self to his Divine Majesty ; and “ therefore I have endeavoured through the “ whole course of my Life, conscientiously to “ discharge my whole Duty so far as I understood it. But because I would not fail of “ that great Good which you have publish’t “ to the World ; therefore my inquiry further “ is, If there be not a Crisis in the business, “ I mean, something that may be done more “ effectually to secure me of my desires ?

To this our Saviour replies, *v. 21.* why then, *If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven.* Not that our Saviour intended this for a standing rule, or a necessary condition of eternal Life ; for we do not find that any where through the whole Gospel, he hath so universally and indispensably propounded it : But his meaning is, That such noble and generous Actions as this, where-ever they are performed in conjunction with an Holy Life (as aforesaid) give mighty proofs of Sincerity, are Ar-

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guments of an hearty love to God, and consequently do afford a man the more comfortable hopes of, and pretensions to eternal Life.

So the result of all is this, The *Via regia*, the plain and beaten way to Heaven, is to be habitually good and holy, and to make conscience all along of every Commandment of God; and this will not fail to bring us to our desired Journeys end: But withal, because the success is of infinite importance, especially because we cannot but be conscious to our selves, that we have in many things either through ignorance, surprisal, or infirmity, failed of our strict Duty; therefore the wisest way to secure so great a Stake, is not to content our selves with an ordinary diligence in performance of exprefs Duties, much less with a passive unblamableness; but generously resolve to do all the great things we can, thereby to demonstrate both the greatness of our minds, and the great value and sense we have of so inestimable an happiness.

And so much for the fourth and last Proposition.

APPLI-

APPLICATION.

And now I have briefly opened the four Observations I gathered from the Text, *viz.*

In the *First* place I have shewed how naturally sollicitous every Man's mind is touching hereafter ; and that the Man that doth not, and would not willingly believe a life to come, yet cannot rid his thoughts of it.

*Secondly*, I have shewed, That it is not jealousie, or meer suspicion, that disquiets the minds of Men in this point ; but that there is real grounds for it, both from the surest Principles of Reason, and the plainest Divine Revelation.

*Thirdly*, We have seen that eternal Life is of such worth and excellency, that no Man can chuse but desire it, if he apprehend there is such a thing.

And *Lastly*, That no Man can reasonably pretend to it, but upon the doing good for the attainment of it.

What remains then, but that in consideration of the Premises, we both reflect upon our selves, and examine what good we have already done, and what lies in our power to do, that so we may enter into life.

We cannot but be sensible, that our present Life wears away apace, Death making his daily approaches towards us, and the great concern of Eternity draws on : Therefore (as the Wise Man advises) whatsoever good thing *our hand finds to do, let us do it with all our might* ; this is the time of Probation for another World, now we stand Candidates for Heaven, and now or never we must secure to our selves eternal life.

When Almighty Goodness hath designed so great a Blessing for us, let us not abject our selves, nor forfeit our Reason, nor forego our Hopes, and *judge our selves unworthy of eternal Life.*

Let us stick at no cost, boggle at no difficulty or danger; spare no labour, study, self-denial; but do or suffer any thing for the attainment of it.

When Naaman the *Assyrian* went to the Prophet to be cured of his Leprosie, the Prophet bid him go *wash seven times in Jordan, &c.* the great

great Man took pet at the usage ; he expected the Prophet would have called on the Name of the Lord over him, and laid his hands upon him, and presently have healed him : But a wise Servant of his retinue, took the freedom to admonish him, saying, *If the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst not thou have done it ? How much more when he saith only, Wash and be clean ?*

I have proved already, That eternal life is infinitely desirable, and I cannot in the least doubt, but that every Man that hears me, actually desires it. What is the matter then ? Do we expect with the Syrian to be cured in state, to be saved cheap and easily, to be brought to Heaven by Miracle, and whether we will or no ? Do we understand what eternal Life is ? And can any thing be too great to do for it ? Can we stand upon terms ?

What would not most Men give for a continuance of this present life, which yet is little else but care and fear, folly and jealousy, pain and sickness, and at last ends in Death ? Yet at what rate would Men be content to purchase (if it was but) *Hezekiah's* Lease of fifteen years addition to the usual term of living ? But to live for ever, for ever ! This is a Pearl of such price, that a wise Merchant would give all that he hath to buy it.

Shall



Shall a little ease, a little pleasure, a little money tempt me to be content to be eternally damned? Shall Heaven and everlasting Blessedness seem dear to me at the price of these?

*If (saith our Saviour) thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee: and if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; for it is better for thee to enter into life halt and maimed, than having two hands and two eyes to be cast into hell.*

Is it not better to deny our selves a little ease here, that we may rest for ever with Abraham and the Patriarchs in the Kingdom of God? Is it not better to forego a little momentary pleasure at present, than to be eternally tormented? Were it not a wiser bargain to be somewhat poorer in this World, so we may inherit a Kingdom in the World to come? Doth not every discreet man value a great deal in Reversion, rather than a little in possession? Eternity is not far off, there is but the Lease of one short life between us and Heaven; and if it was farther off than it is, who but Fools and Children would be so taken with trifles and bables, as to slight so inestimable a good in competition?

Let us therefore as men, and as wise men, lay up for the future, and purchase this great Reversion: As men of great sense and of great minds,



minds, let us contrive with our selves to do some good things, and great too, great as our capacities, and great as our hopes.

Far be it from us that a few cheap Prayers, or some slight Alms, or a formal Profession of Christianity, yea, or being zealous for a Party and Opinion, should be all we bid for Eternity.

I shall not need to specify what great and good things we should do in this case: forasmuch as every mans own Conscience and his peculiar Circumstances will best direct him herein; yet for a Conclusion let me intimate that

To some of us the Providence of God hath given leisure and time and retirement from business: from these he expects they should spend that time in Devotion.

There are others, which the same Divine Providence hath placed in a crowd of business, their Province is to be Examples of Prudence and Justice in the Management of it, and to emerge and get out of it as soon as lawfully they may, that they may the more fully live to God and to their own Souls,

Some it is the Will of God should be low and poor in this World, and these shall do  
great

great things by patience and contentment and resignation to the Will of God.

To others he hath given great Riches and plentiful Accommodations, their Duty is to *be rich in good works*, that is, that they do actions of Charity, Piety and Beneficence as great as their Fortunes; that their Hearts be as large as their Estates, and their Abundance be demonstrated by their accomplishing such good Works as others cannot undertake, rather than by indulging themselves such satisfactions as others cannot pretend to.

Some there are, who by the advantage of an happy Temper, of a great Reputation, and of a peculiar Address, are capable of making peace and agreement amongst Neighbors, and their Talent shews them their Duty.

Besides these, there are some men whom God hath endued with great Parts and Wit, from these he expects they should imploy their Wit for God and Religion, that they should assert the cause of Virtue and Piety against the rude assaults of Atheistical men.

To say no more, some are placed in Magistracy and Authority, these *are called Gods*, because they represent his Divine Majesty in the World; these are therefore to supply his place,  
so

so as that by their Justice and diligence, there may appear to be a Providence in the World: Their peculiar Province is to hold up Government and Order amongst men, to vindicate the oppressed, to discountenance Profaneness and Debauchery, and to shed a lustre upon Piety and Virtue.

In a word, as we may all do some good, so let us not fail to do all the great and good things we can, that so we may lay hold of eternal life. Which God grant to us all through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord, &c.

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*THE END.*

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